

Questions for Critical Readers

Introduction

1. What is the author's goal?
 - 1a. Introduction to new theories?
 - 1b. Review of a particular problem area?
2. How comprehensive is the literature review?
 - 2a. Have any important articles or areas been neglected?
3. What hypotheses will be tested in the experiment?
4. Have all concepts been adequately operationalized?
5. If I had to design an experiment to test these hypotheses, what would I do?

Method

6. Who are the subjects?
 - 6a. How adequate are the selection procedures with respect to number and type of subjects?
 - 6b. If this is consumer or usability research, do the demographics and psychographics match those of the target population users/consumers?
 - 6c. Given the characteristics of the subject sample, can the results be generalized to larger populations?
7. What are the independent, dependent, and control variables?
8. Is the experimental design appropriate?
 - 8a. Would a different experimental procedure be more appropriate?
 - 8b. Is adequate control of nuisance variables being used?
9. How appropriate are the stimuli, materials, test questions, and apparatus?

- 9a. Are the stimuli representative of the operationalized problem?
- 10. How appropriate are the procedures?
 - 10a. Are tasks being properly sequenced?
 - 10b. Where appropriate, has adequate practice been given to subjects?
 - 10c. Are instructions leading or misleading?
 - 10d. Where appropriate, have subjects been given adequate rest periods?
 - 10e. Are contamination effects possible?
- 11. Does the author's method actually test his/her hypotheses?
- 12. Have enough observations been made?
- 13. Is my proposed method better than the author's?
- 14. Using the same subjects, apparatus, and procedures, what results would I expect?

Results

- 15. How have the data been collected?
 - 15a. How has it been coded?
 - 15b. How has it been reduced?
- 16. Has the data been properly analyzed?
 - 16a. Have critical analyses been neglected?
 - 16b. Could alternative or additional analyses be performed?
- 17. Have the tables and figures been properly prepared?
 - 17b. Are they misleading?
- 18. Did the author get the "wrong" results?
- 19. How would I interpret the results?

Discussion

- 20. Have the results been properly interpreted?

21. Do the results support the hypotheses?
- 21a. If not, are adequate explanations offered?
22. Are there alternative explanations for the findings?
23. Is my interpretation better than the author's?
24. Do the findings have any practical significance?
25. What additional research might be performed to increase understanding of the problem?